

HOW TO REST
AND BE RESTED

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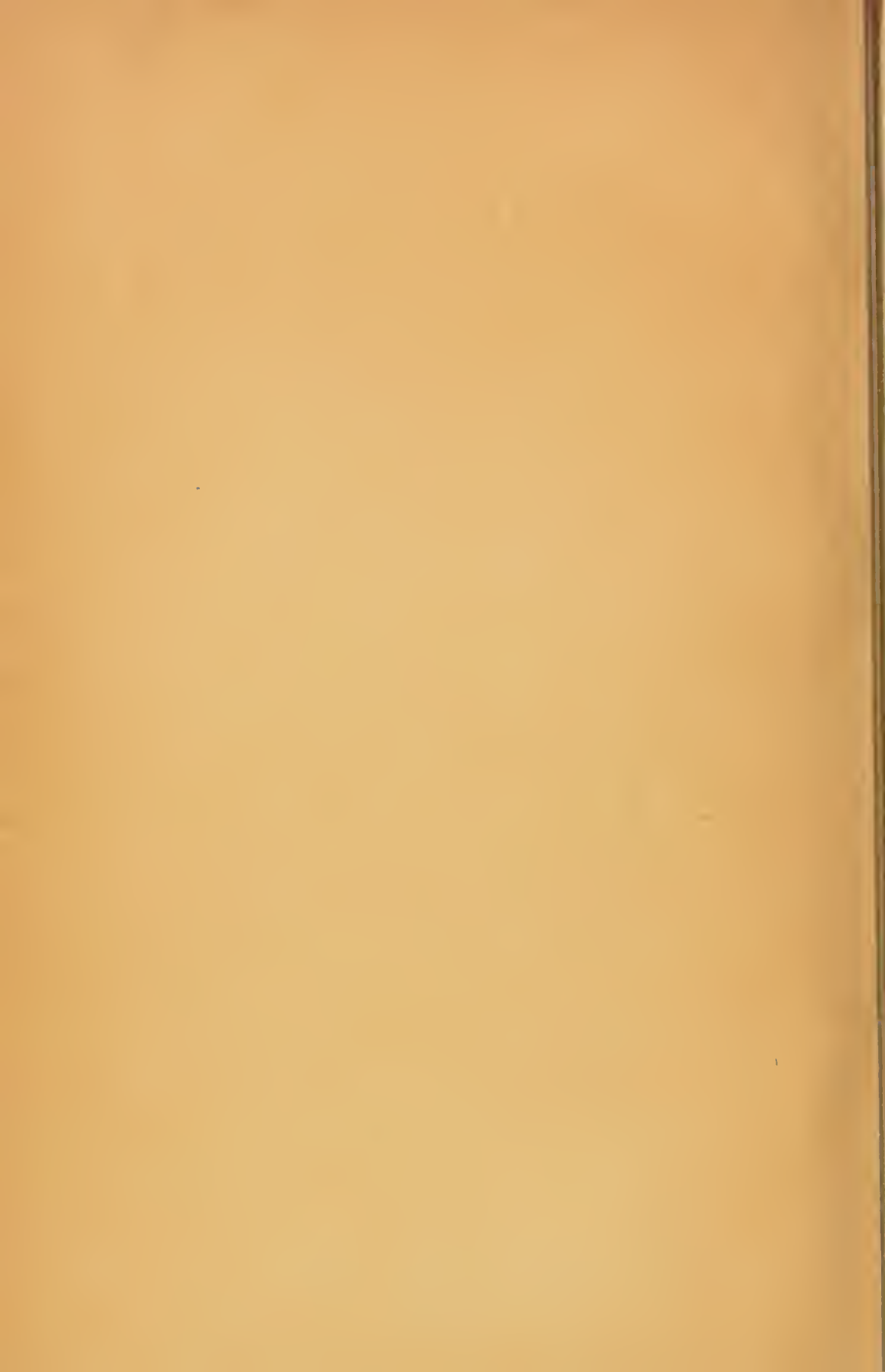
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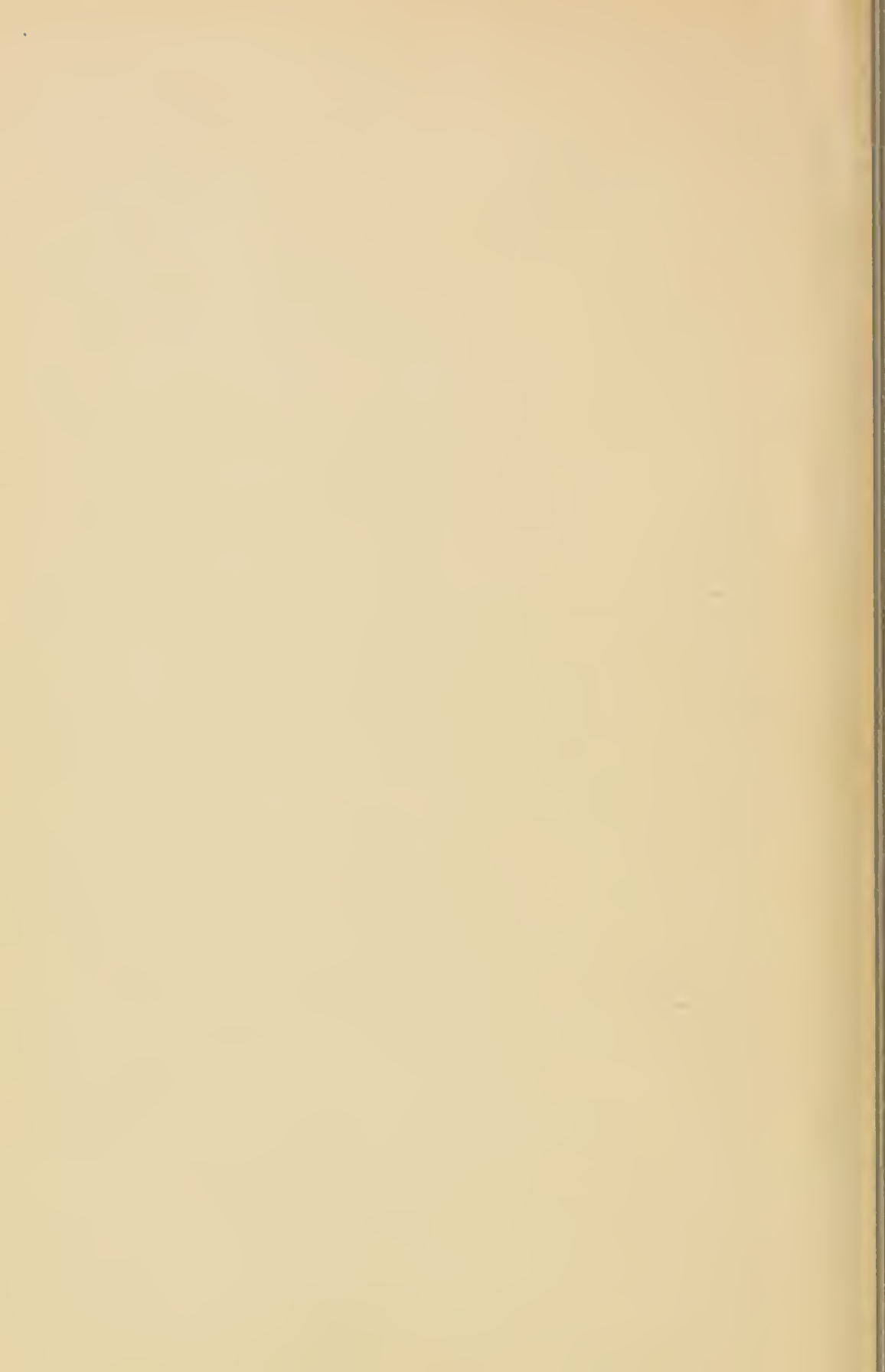
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BY
GRACE DAWSON

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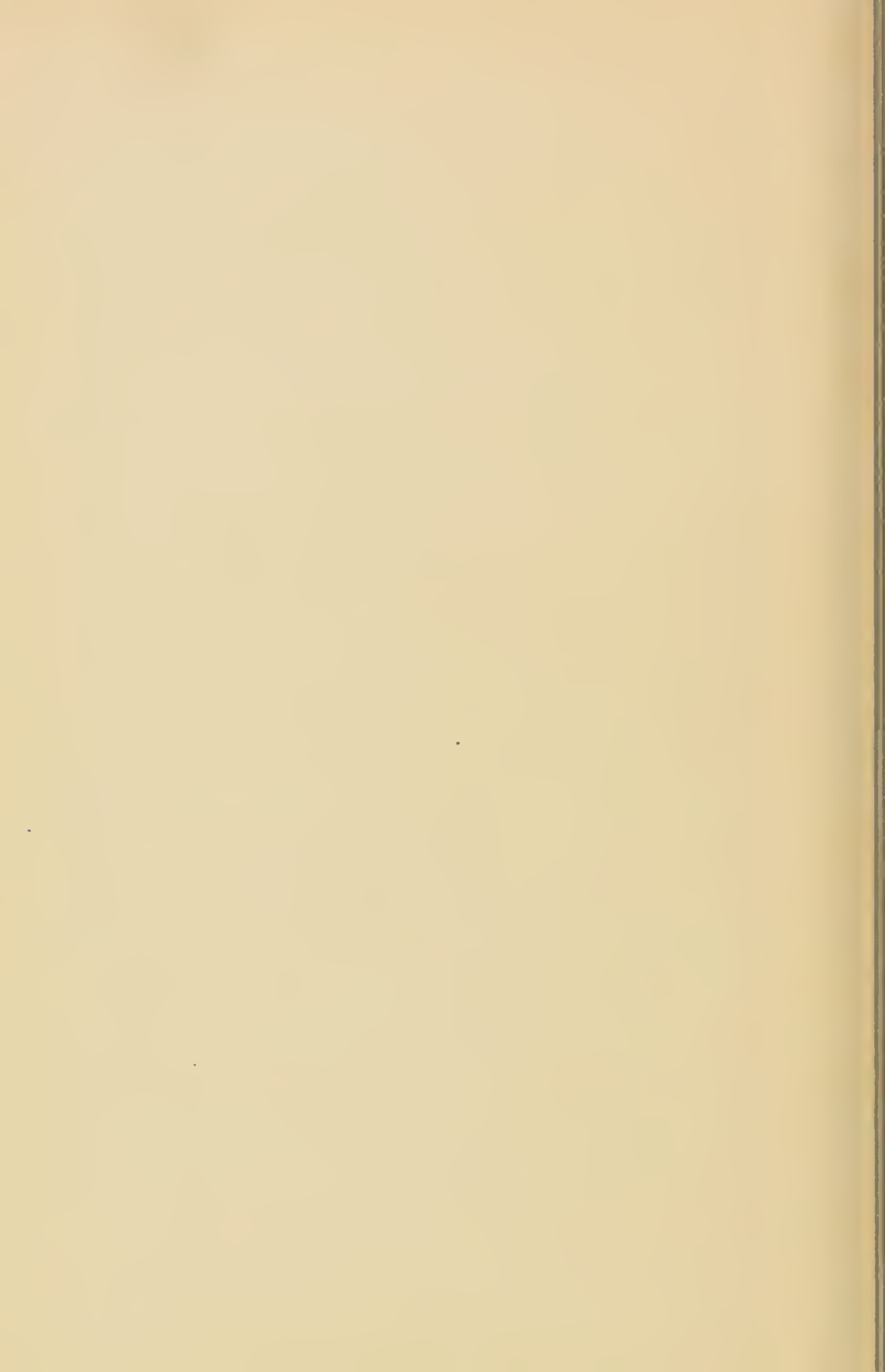
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PREFACE.

QUITE the purpose of this little book to point out practically the restful way of living, and to show the intimate connection between body, mind,—or soul,—and spirit. We are too apt to think of them as entirely separate, and to live life partly for the one and partly for the other. We do not sufficiently realise that they are inseparable in this world, and that all we do and think and say, builds, or unbuilds all three. Wrong to the body is wrong to the mind and to the spirit. The whole man—body, soul and spirit—must live in unity and harmony in order to realise a full and healthy life. We cannot steer aright our ship of life amid continual stress and strain, repression and resistance. We are not meant to do so, for that is the wrong way,—the long, weary, impossible way,—that tires us out and leaves us at last much where we began. We are bound and we do not know it. Bound because we do not realise the way to be free.

The suggestions that follow have proved to be a very practical help to health and freedom for many, and it is the earnest hope that they may prove helpful to many more that has induced me to write this little book.

G. D.



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HOW TO REST AND BE RESTED



PHYSICAL TENSION

WHY do so many people fail to live their busy lives restfully; why do they fall out of Nature's rhythm? Little children, savages and animals all abide in it, as do those who have not been deprived of the power to live naturally by the conventionalities and artificialities of life. It is certain that our manner of living is not conducive to restfulness. It is equally certain that rhythmical or restful living is alone conducive to health. When a nervous patient is ordered rest by the doctor, rest is rarely taken, because the patient does not know how to rest.

Rest in such a case is imperative ; but, before it is possible, the patient must be taught to relax entirely all the tension of mind and body that is keeping him back from rhythmical living, and therefore from health. It is possible to lie on a bed or couch with every nerve and muscle strained with tension, but in such a condition rest is impossible. For real rest, all tension must be entirely relaxed. Now, many people do not even know what tension is ; others, again, are quite sure that they are not tense until they are shown what is meant by tension.

In the first place, then, all tension must be relaxed for perfect rest. As an illustration, study the cat lying outstretched in front of the fire lazily asleep. Gently slip the hands under its body and lift it up. Such a movement from one it knows and trusts will not in the least disturb the cat's repose, because there is no need for action. See then how the legs hang limply down ; mark also the relaxed curve

of the supple body! The cat's repose is perfect, but, if the faintest sound of the scratching of a mouse be heard, or the smell of food reach its nostrils, instantly the animal is vibrating with life and energy. Again, lift the arm of a little baby lying asleep in its cot. Limp and relaxed, the little arm falls back upon the coverlet, the fingers, the legs, even the head, all are perfectly relaxed for the perfect rest which the baby is taking—rest necessary for its growth and health.

That is the sort of rest we all need and ought to take when we go to bed at night. But there is the day's work to do after the night's rest, and during the day we shall need from time to time to use the various faculties and exercise various muscles. We must see to it that we use only those that are required for the performance of each separate action, and that we do not squander our strength and waste our energy by using all at once, and most of them all the day long. A few

examples will best illustrate what is meant by squandering our strength and wasting energy through needless tension.

Two men wished to "test their strength" one day in a station. The first advanced to the machine and seized the lever with determination, tension plain to be seen in every line of his body. The second was much more at his ease. He concentrated tension only in those muscles that were needed to turn the lever, and proved to be the stronger of the two. It is quite probable that, had the first man concentrated his energy likewise, instead of distributing it and wasting it universally and needlessly, he might have proved more successful.

A man in a grocer's shop was cutting a small piece of cheese one day. In order to do this, he seized the wire with tense arms, braced one knee against the counter, stiffened his whole body, and compressed the muscles of his face into grim determination. What waste of energy! Does

it take the whole of one's nerves and muscles to cut a piece of cheese? People often complain that a concert tires them exceedingly, or they come home cross and tired after having been to the theatre. Bad ventilation has, of course, often something to do with this, but tension is also much to blame. How do people listen? Often they cannot relax the tension of their muscles even when sitting down, but brace themselves upon their seats with feet tightly pressed upon the ground, spine and neck rigid, and the breathing shallow and insufficient. A lady was most scornful one day when it was suggested to her that it was possible to rest while sitting on a chair. She protested that she "had never found sitting restful, but had to lie on a couch in order to rest." People who feel like this can scarcely be surprised that talking tires them. Talking in itself is not the least tiring when one can talk naturally and at ease; but when every nerve and muscle is strained with tension at the

same time, no wonder a bad headache or extreme fatigue follow. Standing also tires some people; indeed, many women admit that they cannot stand because it makes them feel faint directly. This is tension again, for there is no fatigue in standing when one knows how to stand.

The fatigue that follows a few hours' shopping is due likewise to tension. In some cases, also, extreme tension may give rise to muscular pains often mistaken for rheumatism, pains which duly disappear when the habit of dropping all unnecessary tension is acquired. With a knowledge of what is meant by tension, and an eye trained to detect it, any close observer will be astonished at the unconscious but absurd and reckless waste of nervous and muscular power by the majority of people. This waste is what Nature abhors, because it breaks her law of rhythm, and it is for this transgression that when a nervous breakdown comes she exacts such a long penalty; this is

the reason that in such cases rest is so urgently required—the reason also that, owing to the long habit of tension, rest cannot be taken.

There are many people who, in spite of the rush of life, still keep their natural habit of rhythmical living. Those who have lost it would do well to get it back, for it makes life a very different thing. To be able to rise and face the busy day with a calm, restful spirit, and in the same spirit to meet all that comes during that day, is something, and it is not impossible. Worry and rush are due often only to tension, mental and physical, and it is tension which often lies at the root of feelings of weary indifference and depression. This is a small thing apparently, and in its beginnings, indeed, tension is scarcely noticeable; but to rid oneself of it, to get back to rhythmical living, is new life.

RHYTHMICAL LIVING

WE must live rhythmically if we would live healthfully. But what is meant by living rhythmically? Nature answers the question far more forcibly than mere words can do. To the seeing eye, as to the thinking mind, this rhythm is plain. It is worth studying, because then we realise the secret of Nature's incessant but tireless energy. Action succeeded by reaction—that is rhythm,—a rhythm which man alone breaks, and in the breaking suffers. It is Nature's law, and if we stray from the right path we will be prosecuted, as Nature's trespassers always are. Life, animate or inanimate, would cease to be if this rhythm were broken. So darkness succeeds light, winter comes after summer, the tide ebbs as surely as it flows, we breathe in only to breathe out again, while

we observe the same rhythmical action in the beating of the heart. What need to multiply instances where so many will at once occur to the reader.

Those who study this great law will find out that all healthful life is governed by it, and that many people are nervous sufferers just because they disregard and break it continually through ignorance. Man would often fain be a law to himself, forgetting in his eagerness that Nature is wiser than he. Life would be to him a very different thing if lived by Nature's law; and if all strain were avoided, far more work would be possible to him, with fuller health and less fatigue.

But some will say, "Wherein do we err? Where do we break this law of rhythm?"

We break it every time we get fussed over "so much to do"; when we insist that we have "no time to rest"; when we lie awake in the night harassed with anxious, worrying thoughts; when

we take upon ourselves more than we know we ought to take. We break it when we rush to the station in great anxiety, and reach it in such good time that we catch the train before the one we went for ; or, in another way, if we drive there, and sit up tense and rigid in the carriage, grasping an umbrella in one hand, a bag in the other, the feet tightly pressed upon the floor, the face contorted with anxiety, feeling unable to realise that we will get to the station just as soon if bag and umbrèlla were laid down and we ourselves relaxed those tense muscles and leant back restfully while we could. We break it whenever we get a feeling of being "rushed," or "driven," or "tied to time." We break it mentally and physically, over and over again, every day of our lives.

We are like little children who, ignorant of music, beat with their little hands upon the piano, and wonder why no tune comes, "only noise." Even so we play

upon our lives, expending all our energies, both muscular and nervous, upon unceasing effort—an expenditure which we cannot and ought not to afford. The skilled musician will not jangle all the notes at once, but each separate chord and note will get its due time, and bear its part in producing the glorious harmony of the whole. So, to live life rhythmically, we must not always strain tense nerves and muscles; we must learn to relax, that we may know how to economise our nervous and muscular power, so that some part of us will always be resting while another is at work. This is living by the law of rhythm. It is the secret of working tirelessly, resting restfully, resisting disease, throwing off morbid feelings, of living healthfully, and feeling zest and enjoyment in our lives. It is our natural instinct, as we can see who study the ways of healthy little children and of animals. We know it, and we feel we have lost it—we who love Nature—when, tired and rushed after

our day's work, we lift up our eyes to the glorious sky at sunset, or come out into the darkness and gaze up at the quiet, steadfast stars. Then the rush and fret alike drop away, and we know what peace is for a while, because we are at one with Nature's great rhythm.

ON NERVES

EVERY one can detail cases of nervous breakdown, or “nerves,” as such troubles are commonly called; but how many realise the intricacy and delicacy of the nervous system, or the ceaseless work which it has to do; how many know the nerves to be a network of countless branches and fibres, intersecting every part of the body, receiving from and conveying to the brain, as master of the material frame, all that differentiates the life of a man from that of a vegetable—sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch? The thoughts we think, the actions we do, nay further, our very temperaments and characters, are dependent to an enormous extent upon the conditions of our nervous systems. Is it not, then, quite clear that if that complex, infinitely delicate and wonderful

nervous system were rightly understood and rightly used, nervous breakdowns would be rare indeed?

We see, then, that rhythmical action and reaction is our natural but lost inheritance. It is common to the healthy little child, as to all animals, and is the secret of their tireless energy. In the artificial complexity of later life many of us, and nervous sufferers always, lose this simple and natural use of nerves and muscles. The strain of life, its hurry, rush, anxiety and competition, produce a mental strain which induces a curiously corresponding strain upon the nerves and muscles, and in time this strain will end in a nervous breakdown. To prevent a breakdown, mind and body alike must be trained to relax entirely for complete rest first, and then the endeavour must be made to get back into Nature's rhythmical way of living, which is the only healthful way.


To the nervous invalid, of what benefit are the usual remedies prescribed? These

remedies—tonics, change of air, feeding, rest, massage—are all excellent as far as they go; but they do not go far enough. In fact, they never touch the root of the matter; therefore they act much like stimulants, bracing for a time, but sooner or later in most cases the old “slack” feelings of weariness and inertia return. The nervous system, long overstrained, is at last thoroughly unstrung and out of control; but it only needs training back again to health and vigour. External stimulants cannot cure where the doctor pronounces the patient to be suffering “only from nerves”; but when we learn to live again rhythmically the cause of the ailment is for ever removed, and such a mental attitude and such wise economy of energy are induced that a recurrence of “nerves” is impossible, unless the patient allows himself to drift back into the old habits which caused the overstrain and consequent nervous exhaustion.

To all of us, but especially to all

workers in all professions, how needful it is to have the nerves under control, to be able to work restfully, yet with full and clear capacity! To students and school-children also such knowledge is health and power for life.

MENTAL TENSION

“ DON'T see what good relaxing my muscles can do my mind,” many a person says, after just having declared a strong belief in the influence of mind over body and body over mind.

“Do you mean to tell me that lying on the floor with all my muscles relaxed can possibly help to calm my distress, conquer my tendency to worry, and train me better in self-control?”

Again, “How can learning to relax tension possibly affect and help mind as well as body?”

To argue the question, and attempt to show how and why, is simply waste of time. The only answer possible is, “Try it, and see how it is and why, and the result will certainly be convincing.”

When a nervous patient is ordered rest by the doctor, it is rarely taken, because the patient does not know how

to rest. Rest in such a case is imperative, but before it is possible the patient must know how to relax entirely all tension of mind body.

We are so constituted that it is impossible thoroughly to relax the one without the other. Natural sleep must and does rest mind and brain, and natural rest without sleep reinvigorates and refreshes both mind and body. To those who have tried and therefore proved this the fact and the reason are so plain that they are impatient with others who, like themselves at first, cannot understand or believe that this is so. Sleep, as we all know, is impossible when the mind is occupied with thought, worry, anxiety or excitement, yet the body is supposed to be resting. We all know, though, that after a sleepless night caused by mental strain of some kind we rise in the morning more tired than when we went to bed. Why is this? All night the mind has been tense and at work, and because of

the entire sympathy between them the body has been tense also. The one is an inevitable result of the other, and proves the fact that for real rest both mind and body must be relaxed. When we are physically low we all find it much more difficult to exercise self-control, and those of us who have highly nervous temperaments, of course, more specially so. To lie awake all night from any mental cause shows at least temporary lack of self-control, because none of us would willingly endure a sleepless night. To be able to relax the body at will generally requires some help and practice after long years of tense habits, but after a certain amount of time and attention the control of the muscles becomes easy. Mental tension can also be relaxed at will with due help and practise, and after due time and attention the control of the mind in this respect becomes comparatively easy. Imagine the difference which this control makes in life. It is obvious that a person who can men-

tally relax at will can never suffer from the reaction of a long strain, because there can never be any strain to suffer from. Of course, to attain absolute control would be to reach an ideal condition, but to attain control even in some measure is a gain unspeakable. It makes life quite a different thing, because through learning to relax mentally many things become at least tolerable which before were thought to be unendurable.

A highly nervous patient, who also suffered from delicate health, told me one day that she had a friend of whom she was very fond. For years she had not asked her to stay with her because she knitted a great deal, and wore a great many bangles which jingled as she knitted; and the nervous irritation produced by the combined incessant knitting and jingling were more than she as her hostess could endure. "However," she said, "I shall ask my friend this summer, for now I know that I can relax to the irritation."

Irritability is one form of mental tension, and one which can be overcome by relaxing both muscles and mind. The mental tension betrayed by irritation is always reflected again in tense muscles, because mind and body are in sympathy with each other. To relax to a feeling of irritation or a sudden fit of anger sounds absurd to those who have never tried it; nevertheless it is a certain remedy, and one which, unlike mere repression, leaves no feeling of strain.

MIND AND BODY

TO relax mentally is difficult, and takes a great deal of practice and perseverance; but eventually it becomes a habit. To those who have acquired it, superfluous tension either of mind or body is no longer endurable, for it has a quickly deleterious effect. Anger and irritation are both unlovely and things to be avoided, because their effects are actually injurious, both physically and mentally.

A nursing mother is obliged to be careful as to diet, as many things that she herself would enjoy have a most injurious or even fatal effect upon her infant drawing its nourishment from her breast. It is well known also that all violent emotions affect the quality of the mother's milk, as they affect for health or ill-health every tissue of the body in all of us. It

seems strange that, even after acknowledging the truth of this scientific fact, people should ignore it in practical daily life ; and go blundering on with nerves and muscles, mind and body always tense, and then wonder and grumble at the natural reaction of physical or mental disability as "incomprehensible," "very hard," etc.

If a man lives under insanitary conditions in an unhealthy neighbourhood, nobody wonders why he is never really well, or why he is at last laid up with some severe illness. Cause and effect are patent enough to all. Less apparent causes pass unnoticed. Again, if a man continually overworks his mental, or physical powers with study or manual occupations, no one is surprised when at last he breaks down. The cause is plain enough, and needs no comment. More subtle causes escape observation, yet they are just as certain in their effects. True it is that "we reap what we sow." Only

recently a patient suffering from a severe nervous breakdown asserted that of course she believed in the power of the mind over the body. Some weeks later a trivial circumstance occurred which entirely deprived her of her already sadly impaired self-control. She gave way completely, could think of nothing else, and was awake and up all night in a pitiable condition of mental distress. In the morning she appeared with a terribly bad headache, and felt sick and exhausted and thoroughly ill. Then she became nervous about her physical state, saying that she felt she was getting weaker. When I pointed out to her that her mental condition had brought on the physical reaction, she indignantly denied that the one had anything to do with the other. It was observable, however, that the physical weakness disappeared in a couple of days—as soon, in fact, as the reaction wore itself out. Those who are interested, and want to prove for themselves the intimate connec-

tion between mind and body, can soon convince themselves by fair and honest tests, and they will be amazed to find how often their health depends on the attitude of their mind and temper; how often a headache follows a fit of depression, or an outburst of anger or irritation; how worry and anxiety set up indigestion and many other ailments; how protracted grief undermines the health; how joy and love make for health, and sorrow and hatred or bitterness develop chronic invalidism. Then on the other hand they will notice how much the state of the body influences that of the mind.


One day a lady asked me to go and see her, as she wanted to consult me. Naturally she is a good woman with a bright temperament, but I found her in a low, nervous condition, and in great mental distress. She told me that she had everything to make life happy. A dear husband and children, a beautiful home and plenty of money, and really no troubles;

but often she got so depressed and irritable, and this was a great trouble to her. She fought against the depression and irritability, but it was no use, and, "Oh, I blame myself, I don't know what has come over me," she ended, as she burst into tears.

I showed her that she could not help the depression and irritation then because it was the reaction of the mind due to her low physical state. I told her not to make herself worse by blaming herself, and fretting over, as a sin, a condition which was but a temporary one, and due simply to the reaction of tired nerves. She was greatly surprised at this point of view, and became much interested as I talked to her of the influence of mind over body and body over mind. She came to me for instruction, and as she regained her health she regained also all her brightness and sweet temper, and the unnatural depression and irritation disappeared. I give only these two examples out of countless

ones which have come under my experience. There are laws of health both for mind and body, and the transgression of those laws either for the one or the other entails certain suffering on both.

TEMPERAMENT

T is frequently said, "that we cannot help our nature," but such a statement is not wholly true. Is it not often used as a convenient conscience salve for our own misdeeds and mistakes, or put forward as a plea for those of someone else? As a belief it is surely impossible, for it limits Divinity.

People of highly nervous temperaments develop many unexpected and unpleasant traits of character when their health is impaired, or even when they are a little below par. Irritability, worry and restlessness are some of the most frequent mental reactions, traceable to some physical cause often unacknowledged or unsuspected. One who possesses this nervous temperament finds it always difficult to control even when well, as he is affected

by and feels things much more acutely than another whose temperament is more normal, and whose feelings therefore are much less sensitive. The latter takes life as it comes—generally easily and pleasantly—makes plenty of friends, is healthy and popular, glad to come and equally glad to go, intent for the most part upon the present moment, and never dwelling upon the past with keen regret. Imitative often, but not original, possessed of an easy and even temper, gay, sunny and charming, and quite contented to take things as they are without question. The former is always questioning and probing life, feels everything far too acutely, is over-sensitive and over-conscientious, loves deeply and accordingly suffers profoundly, is apt to dwell on the past with sadness and regret, is not of a strong constitution, though possessed of marvellous vitality, is fanciful and imaginative, often morbidly introspective, reserved, shy and self-conscious. Some have too high an opinion

of themselves, some too low. Restless, imaginative, moody, sympathetic, artistic, and often difficult to understand. From their ranks come geniuses, artists, writers, composers, musicians, actors, pioneers, fanatics, and thinkers. To them it is given greatly to enjoy, but also greatly to suffer, for life to them is never easy, handicapped, as it were, both by constitution and by temperament. Yet generally they make it much harder than it need be, both mentally and physically, by the very way in which they endeavour to make it easier, namely, by straining mind and body through resisting and fighting against all their faults and nervous feelings, thereby after all only repressing, not curing them, and wearing themselves out with the perpetual tension.

PRACTICAL

QT must be remembered that mind and body should work in harmony, that tension in the one means tension in the other, and therefore to relax the body is generally at first the best way towards relaxing the mind. When we understand and recognise physical tension in ourselves we shall also soon understand and recognise mental tension also. A fit of anger means tension both of mind and body—tension so acute for the time that it is often succeeded by an unpleasant reaction of exhaustion and intense depression. In order to be angry we must exercise tension. The mind being tense with passion, the body sympathetically reflects this tension in the accelerated beating of the heart, clenching of the hands, tightening

of the jaws and flushing of the face. How can relaxing this physical tension effect a relaxing of the mental tension also, and succeed in preventing the outburst of anger? Can anyone be angry sitting in a comfortable position with relaxed muscles, calm heart-beat, gentle eyes, and a smiling mouth?

Irritability sets up the same kind of physical tension, to be able to relax to which helps greatly to free one from this far too common fault. The relaxing helps the tired nerves and muscles also, and thus removes the cause of the irritation.

Recognising the entire interdependence of mind and body, we need to be practical in our recognition and to make practical use of our knowledge, instead of just being content to admit the fact. This principle of relaxing, or non-resistance, is the key to harmony between mind and body, it is the way to meet and to live life, the Christ way, the way of health both physical and mental.

SPIRITUAL TENSION

PRIMITIVE man meets evil with evil. "A blow for a blow," is his creed, a creed which he enforces without hesitation, remorse or pity, but with intense earnestness and determination. Further, he gives himself no rest until his revenge is accomplished. His desire is to wipe out the insult, but his method is not only short-sighted, but in reality it only adds to and intensifies the very evil that he so fiercely desires to kill. Vengeance was the creed of the Jews. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." It is still the unconscious creed of many.

There are two ways of meeting evil. One by resistance, the fruitful soil which only increases and strengthens it—that is primitive man's way. The other by non-

resistance, in which soil it cannot take root,—and that is Christ's way.

“I say unto you that ye resist not evil,” Christ taught, Christ whom evil could neither touch nor hold. It is a saying simple enough. Yet surely it is not rightly understood, because it is tacitly ignored even by those who want to follow the Master's teaching, but who think that in effect such a policy is unworkable and unpractical. So in his pride man breaks God's law and way and suffers, and then wonders bitterly why he suffers.

“I say unto you that ye resist not evil.”

Temptation comes to a man and he resists it. He thinks about it and struggles against it, and because of his thoughts and struggles it assumes larger and larger proportions. He determines not to indulge in it, he prays against it. But what chance has he of escaping it, or conquering it as long as he holds it so firmly in his thoughts? There is only one sure way of escape and of victory—Christ's

way. "I say unto you that ye resist not evil."

Why, then, hold and resist temptation? Let it go. Nothing can hold our thoughts against our will. That is the way of non-resistance—not even to hold the thought, but to let it pass by and so drop away. To relax it.

I have often watched a loved dog in the face of great temptation—temptation not to touch some tempting morsel near him, within easy reach but forbidden. The dog, once told not to touch, simply turned his back and would not look. He did not resist the temptation, he simply refused to be tempted.

A drunkard has no chance of overcoming his temptation if he allows it constantly to dwell in his thoughts. It is useless to place drink before him and then to tell him to resist his craving for it. The only way for him is the way of non-resistance, and that is to keep out of sight and smell and thought of the temptation,

and so refuse to be tempted. Again, a passionate temper will never be overcome by trying not to get angry under provocation. The only way of overcoming is by refusing to admit the provocation. It is useless to try to conquer any fault simply by holding it in check, for that only represses it, and from time to time it will break out again in spite of all efforts. As a matter of fact, repression and resistance only exhaust and dishearten. By those methods we climb so far with infinite difficulty, and then one day temptation swoops down upon us like the stone of Sisyphus, and we are back to our old place to begin climbing again in the old way. To realise and practise this Christ-law physically and mentally is to lift one up from the land of shadows and unrealities into the hill tops of light.

But some will say, "We do not understand how to apply this law of non-resistance." None of us can understand by hearsay, only by practice. In this

little book I have tried to point out the only practical method of living one's life according to God's law. Many practise this law all unconsciously when, for instance, they deliberately refuse to think of an annoyance, or to repeat an unkind tale, or to keep up a quarrel. In national affairs we are also beginning to apply it when we prefer arbitration to war. It is difficult to realise it always as a principle because our inherited tendencies of resistance are still so strong. Primitive man in us ever urges, "A blow for a blow."

But again, it may be argued, "How are we to understand the text, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you"? It is surely understandable only according to Christ's way, the way in which He met and conquered His temptations, which never for a moment held or had power over Him. He did not resist them with stress and strain and agonies of supplication, with hours and days and years of resistance. He refused to fight evil. "Get

thee behind Me, Satan," and the evil spirit fled, and "angels came and ministered unto Him."

"The sword of the Spirit," is surely that of non-resistance. Earthly weapons are fashioned for resistance, but strife breeds only strife; spiritual weapons are those of non-resistance, and they alone are all victorious because they alone are irresistible.



